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**SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
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Good morning Chairman Richardson and fellow members of the Committee. I want to first thank you for holding this hearing. Emergency communications, preparedness and response are high priorities for the City of Long Beach and the region and I know you share these priorities as well. Long Beach is a proud member of FEMA Region 9, an active member in the Mutual Aid system, and we are working hard with our local cities and the State of California to improve emergency communications, preparedness and response in the unfortunate event of a natural or man-made disaster.

As you are well aware, our local area has very serious homeland security threats, including foremost the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Both Los Angeles and Long Beach continue to require significant federal assistance to secure these two ports, which are incredibly valuable economic generators for the entire nation.

To give an example, Long Beach refineries are responsible for one-third of the gasoline west of the Rockies. The Port of Los Angeles contributes \$226.9 billion annually to the national economy through trade, and the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach handle 30 percent of all U.S. shipping imports.

According to a 2005 RAND study on the short-term and long-term economic impacts of a nuclear attack on the Port of Long Beach, the economic impact could initially exceed \$1 trillion dollars.

Additionally, our region is uniquely vulnerable to other acts of terrorism. As the center of the film and entertainment industry, the Southern California region is the face of iconic American culture. The region puts on hundreds of events each year that are broadcasted to the rest of the world. While not permanent pieces of infrastructure, these high profile events with large clusters of people are targets for terrorists and need to be taken into greater consideration when evaluating risk.

However, our Operational Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Areas have been the beneficiary of federal assistance to develop a significant preparedness and response capability to potential terrorist threats. Over the past four years, the combined Los Angeles / Long Beach local region received over \$400 million dollars through Urban Area Security Initiative funds and the State Homeland Security Grant Program. These funds have been instrumental in increasing the overall capabilities of emergency operations in the Region.

In the case of Long Beach, over the past 10 years Long Beach has received \$61 million dollars in federal grant funding. These funds have come from eight programs including the Department of Defense, Office of Domestic Preparedness, Metropolitan Medical Response System, Office of Justice Programs, State Homeland Security Grant Program, Citizens Corps Program, Law Enforcement Tactical Planning and Preparedness, but mostly, from the Urban Area Security Initiative. The Urban Area Security Initiative has been instrumental in furthering emergency preparedness and protections for the City. Of the \$61 million in Homeland Security funding Long Beach has received, \$55 million was funded through the Urban Area Security Initiative.

Specifically, the Long Beach Fire Department has upgraded existing communications capabilities at our state of the art ECOOC, or Emergency Communications and Operations Center. The addition of a command and control platform and the upgrade of radio equipment and technology will ensure that communications with partner response agencies are possible. These funds have also allowed us to work with fire agencies within our Operational Area. We have also standardized the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, which is integral in keeping our public safety personnel safe as they work to bring others to safety. Additionally, we have added interoperable connectivity to our breathing equipment so that firefighters can assist each other.

We have seen in disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, that the ability to move many people at once is absolutely necessary. Our Urban Area Security Initiative funds have allowed Long Beach and the region to increase our capacity to treat multiple victims with the deployment of Mass Casualty equipment and supplies. To this end, we have also used Urban Area Security Initiative funds and other Homeland Security grants to enhance our Urban Search and Rescue capabilities.

The Port of Long Beach is a significant asset in our region. As the Port receives mass amounts of goods and supplies from around the world, we have, in cooperation with the Port and the region, secured the capabilities to deploy a Hazardous Materials Team equipped with protective equipment and medicines to keep our public safety employees safe while they work to protect the public and keep the Port complex functioning. However, despite some investment in this area, protecting international trade is a core responsibility of the federal government and a much larger commitment is needed to truly protect our community and the entire nation.

Our local police department has also benefited from Homeland Security grant funds. The capabilities of the SWAT team have been increased through the purchase of specialized equipment, personal protective equipment and an armored vehicle. In coordination with other law enforcement agencies in the Operational Area, the region has secured communications equipment for interoperability and significantly increased intelligence capabilities by participating in the Joint Regional Intelligence Center. These funds have also implemented an Automated License Plate Recognition system that has given regional law enforcement agencies the ability to quickly identify vehicles within the City and apprehend individuals that pose a threat to our community.

Homeland security funds have also increased the region's capabilities to distribute medicine during a significant disaster with the development of Point of Dispensing sites throughout the Region. Funds have also been utilized to increase the capabilities of our local laboratory to analyze, detect and rule out chemical and biological threats.

The Los Angeles / Long Beach region is home to many airports, including Long Beach Airport. Homeland Security funds have increased security at Long Beach Airport with the installation of physical barriers and cameras. These homeland security upgrades have also been implemented at other airports in the region.

Since the onset of the Homeland Security grants and even prior to the current Homeland Security model, Long Beach has focused on utilizing these funds to increase our region's overall capabilities. We apply for and use these funds based upon risk and the ability to utilize awards in conjunction with local resources.

Long Beach and the region strongly believe that Homeland Security dollars must be targeted to areas of highest threat and need, and Long Beach is supportive of the Department of Homeland Security's risk-based funding approach to Homeland Security grants. Funding formulas that guarantee minimum amounts to all states regardless of risk should continue to be reduced significantly.

Despite the Department's intent to fund cities at highest risk, the Los Angeles and Long Beach Urban Area has consistently experienced a decrease in UASI funding since 2006. Even with a slight increase in funding in FY 2010, funding has decreased 13 percent overall since FY 2006. In comparison, over the same period, the Bay Area has received an increase of 51 percent, the New York region has increased 22 percent, and the Chicago region has increased 4 percent. It is important to remember the unique cultural, geographic and economic aspects of the Los Angeles / Long Beach Urban area that are sometimes not taken into account. We strongly believe that the region needs more homeland security aid in the fight against terrorism precisely because it is a high value target for terrorists and an attack would have enormous consequences that would be felt around the world.

In terms of future needs, the region is counting on the support of the federal government through Homeland Security funds to develop complete interoperability between public safety agencies within the Region's Operational Area. This interoperability project is currently in the design phase and will need significant funding in the future to be successful. Long Beach supports additional dedicated funding for interoperable communications for regions based on risk, and not based on a formula that distributes funds to all states regardless of risk.

As you all know, there are always many shifting management components whenever a disaster strikes. This is why training exercises during times of peace is so important. Long Beach and the entire region is counting on the federal government to continue to support training exercises so that we can be prepared to assist our communities and the nation in the unfortunate event of a disaster.

The capability that Long Beach and other cities have developed over the past decade must be sustained into the future. As we move forward, much of the equipment secured will eventually need to be replaced. Long Beach supports the Department allowing replacement of previously purchased equipment as an eligible grant use, as much of the equipment purchased under the first rounds of UASI grant funding will have to be eventually replaced to maintain the current level of response capability.

Long Beach and the region area are also requesting that Homeland Security play a role in meeting our personnel costs. Emergency communications, preparedness and response is a personnel intensive operation. The ability for us to move forward requires the continuous development and maintenance of personnel, training and plans.

Additionally, we appreciate the support of Congress to continue to provide homeland security funds without the burden of a matching requirement. Cities are not in the financial situation to afford any type of match, and much of the response personnel the federal government will require in the event of a national emergency will be the local first responders that local governments already provide for utilizing local funds.

Long Beach also requests that Congress and the Department of Homeland Security reevaluate the administration allowances in the various grant programs. Under the UASI program for example, local regions are constrained to 3 percent of the total grant amount to administer the grant, while states are allowed to set aside up to 20 percent. This imbalance leaves local areas with very few funds to administer these complex grant programs, and a reevaluation the 3 percent allowance could help local governments tremendously in handling the administrative duties of effective grant management.

We have enjoyed a very good working relationship with Region 9 representatives because they understand the complexity and needs of this area. Because of this relationship, we support FEMA's concept of moving some grant programs or functions to the Regions. If the Regions are supported with adequate personnel and flexibility, we believe that programs can be streamlined and issues addressed quickly. However, if the proposal simply creates another layer of approvals or review, this will significantly hamper effectiveness and threaten the excellent relationship we have enjoyed to date. We are optimistically awaiting the details of the proposal.

Finally, Chairwoman Richardson, I would like to thank you again for allowing this opportunity to share with the Committee a few of the many emergency communications, preparedness and response activities that are going on in FEMA Region 9. We wholeheartedly appreciate the support you have bestowed upon us over the years, and we look forward to continuing this partnership in the best interests of national security and protecting our communities.